

My name is Tom Moore. Prior to my retirement in 2012 I was President of the International Union of Operating Engineers, Local 95. I live in Ross Township with my wife, four children and grandson. Three of my children have special needs.

Ten years ago my mother-in-law was widowed and moved from her home in Monroeville to a house on my street. Slowly as her age increased and her health decreased we assumed more and more responsibilities for her home and her daily needs. For the past five years as her physical health deteriorated rapidly and her mind succumbed to advancing alzheimers disease my wife and I became her caregivers. All household chores both inside and out had to be done by us. We provided all her meals, did all her shopping, scheduled and drove her to all her appointments, administered all her medicines multiple times a day, took care of her finances and saw to all her other day to day needs.

At the same time we were still fulfilling all those same responsibilities for our children plus the added commitment of their individual school, social and leisure activities and the appointments related to their special needs. All while providing childcare for our grandson so that his mother can work.

The physical demands of taking care of two families is tiring. Two yards to cut, drives to shovel, houses to clean, extra meals, extra laundry, extra appointments. The extras are neverending. The emotional demands and time constraints are harder. If a child has a therapy appointment and gram has a doctors appointment which is more important? Neither can attend an appointment alone. If you want to go to dinner with a friend you have to find someone to take medicine and dinner to gram or check to make sure she got into bed. If you're out and she accidentally pushed her safety alarm you have to go home. There are rarely long evenings out as a couple. There are never vacation as a couple or even as a family. Taking care of your own needs becomes your lowest priority because you're too busy seeing to everyone elses needs.

My wife and I are very committed to each other and our family. We both have a close knit extended family that gives us emotional support. We also each have a large group of friends that allows us an opportunity to individually spend time away from our daily commitments.

Unfortunately there aren't enough reliable, affordable services for the elderly. What services are out there are not widely known and often only discovered when comiserating with someone else in the same situation. Medical professionals tell you to call your insurance to see what is available. Insurance tells you to ask your medical professionals. In the end you just keep doing what needs done and hoping not to much falls thru the cracks.